subsequently reducing the oxidized copper in said [anode] blister copper refining furnace into the copper of higher purity; and

subsequently discharging said copper of higher quality from said [anode] blister copper refining furnace; and

wherein said blister copper receiving step and said oxidizing step are carried out at least partly in an overlapping fashion.

3. (Amended) The process as recited in claim 2, wherein said [anode] blister copper refining furnace includes a furnace body supported rotatably about an axis thereof with said axis being arranged horizontally, said furnace body including a tuyere opening thereinto, and wherein said oxidizing step includes blowing said oxidizing gas into said anode furnace while adjusting a depth of said tuyere from a melt surface in said [anode] blister copper refining furnace by rotating said furnace body.

5. (Amended) A copper smelting process comprising the steps of:

providing a matte-producing means, a converting furnace, a plurality of [anode] blister copper refining furnaces and blister copper launder means for connecting said converting furnace and said [anode] blister copper refining furnaces and for transferring blister copper from said converting furnace to said [anode] blister copper refining furnace;

producing matte in said matte-producing means and oxidizing said matte produced in said matte producing means into blister copper in said converting furnace;

subsequently causing said blister copper produced in said converting furnace to flow through said blister copper launder means into one of said [anode] blister copper refining furnaces; and

refining said blister copper into copper of higher purity in said [anode] blister copper refining furnaces.--

SUPPORT FOR AMENDMENTS

The amendments to the claims enter those changes agreed upon at the interview of March 3, 1994 and change the phrase "anode furnaces" to --blister copper refining furnaces--. These changes are supported throughout the specification, particularly at page 4, lines 1-2, in the several Figures, and at page 6, lines 7-9. No new matter would be added to this application upon entry of the above amendments.

Claims 2-5 are pending in this application.

REMARKS

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Rosenberg for the helpful and courteous interview of March 3, 1994. During the interview the above-identified application was discussed as were the several issued and co-pending related applications of the same group of inventors (Moto Goto et al). Applicants